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RIGHT OF REPLY

BY THE INDONESIAN OBSERVER DELEGATION

ON ITEM 9

GENEVA, 27 FEBRUARY 1986

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Mr. Chairman,

Since it is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, allow me to convey my sincere congratulations to you Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of this august Commission. I am convinced that under your able and experienced leadership, our deliberations will be brought to a successful conclusion. May I also take this opportunity to extend my felicitations to the other members of the Bureau and at the same time express our deep appreciation of the work carried out by the Commission during its last session under the exemplary stewardship of the outgoing Chairman, Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury.

Mr. Chairman,

In the course of the present debate on item 9, certain delegations and Non-Governmental Organizations have again seen fit to refer to East Timor in terms rich in distortive imagery and calumny, but as usual, quite empty in factual substance or credibility. For how else can we describe the statements made always by the same Delegations and organizations, year after year, harping on the same well-worn themes of accusations and fabrications, the same reckless use of such terms as "genocide", "famine" and "barbarity". In desperately painting a picture of conditions in East Timor so far removed from reality, objective and readily available information and testimony by those who have actually visited and observed the real situation in the territory continue to be ignored and dismissed. Instead, the standard fare of spurious allegations, innuendo, distortion and disinformation are constantly rehashed and repeated, despite detailed and documented facts to the contrary. Is it any wonder, then, that my Government has come to the

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conclusion that what motivates these Delegations and Organizations to persist in their campaign against Indonesia is not so much their loftily espoused humanitarian concern for the people of East Timor but rather a politically inspired, systematic but vain attempt to malign Indonesia and to keep alive an issue which has long since lost its relevance and credibility to a growing majority of peoples and governments of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

Since, as I said, there was nothing new in what these representatives had to say while referring to East Timor, my Delegation on its part does not wish to be drawn into making a repetitive statement and thus impose on the valuable time of the Commission. However, on the basic question of self-determination, let me restate the incontrovertible fact that it is now almost ten years ago that self-determination and decolonisation have taken place in East Timor; that its people, in accordance with their traditional democratic practices and in conformity with Resolutions 1514 (XV) and Principles VI, VIII and IX of Resolution 1541 (XV) have chosen independence through integration with Indonesia; that in so doing, the overwhelming majority and the true representatives of the East Timorese people had registered a clear repudiation of the designs of those elements which sought to impose, by force of arms, a fait accompli on the territory; and that, by participating fully, freely and equally in all respects in the national elections of Indonesia in 1982, the people of East Timor have given clear reconfirmation of their choice. Thus, far from annexing, invading or occupying another independent state, as has been alleged, Indonesia's role in East Timor was precisely one of contributing to the process of just decolonization inter alia by helping to ensure that the democratically expressed will of the majority not be overruled by the unilateral and ruthless imposition of a minority, who posed as revolutionaries but were in fact collaborators of the colonial power.

Mr. Chairman,

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As to the various allegations with regard to the humanitarian and human rights aspects of the situation in the province, rather than giving our own rebuttal, let me this time quote what other, reputable sources had to say on these subjects.

In its February 1986 Bulletin (No.121) the ICRC described its activities in East Timor during 1985 inter alia in the following terms :

> "Discussions with Indonesian authorities in February and March of 1985 led to an agreement outlining ICRC activities on the main island of East Timor as well as on the off-island of Atauro. During two series of visits in April and November, a team composed of two delegates, one doctor and one nurse saw 301 detainees in four places of detention. In June, the ICRC was again granted access to the interior of the main island, and carried out a medical and nutritional survey in 25 villages. After this evaluation, and again in December when they returned to five of these villages, delegates submitted a report to the authorities, who agreed to act upon their recommendations .... " "The food and medical programme set up to help displaced people on Atauro continued throughout the year ...." "The displaced population on Atauro originally numbered about 4,000, but in December of 1985 only 940 remained. The ICRC was granted permission to assess the situation of those returned to the main island, and visited some 1400 of these "returnees" in three regions during April and October .... " "In addition, the ICRC continues to reunite families, a program which began in 1979 .... " "Under a separate agreement negotiated between the Portuguese and Indonesian governments, 54 former Portuguese civil servants and their families, about 400 people in all, will soon return to Portugal".

Recently, Mr. Chairman, Pastor Ruediger Seifert of the Federal Republic of Germany paid an extensive visit to East Timor. Let me quote some of his impressions as contained in his report recently published. (I quote from its unofficial English translation) :

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"I have read the accusations against Indonesia by those organizations which stand up for respecting human rights ; accordingly, I was able to draw a relevant program for my latest visit in East Timor. The Indonesian authorities did not impose any restrictions on my program. I was able to organize it myself. I could change the program at short notice ; my visits were not well prepared and I visited persons and institutions by surprise. Due to this, I was able to gain a more realistic view on today's situation". ..... During my visit I have seen no malnutrition in the villages of the main island in Atauro or in Atauro's camp". ..... One sunday, I visited Baucau's market : The variety of offers was even greater than in some other Indonesian provinces. It was quite busy at the market place. Items for daily use as well as food were offered sufficiently and could be afforded by the people"..... "I was especially impressed by the development projects of the Church in Fatumaka, i.e. an educational center for young people which is also financially supported by the Governor of the Province, and of the new village community of Cairui, in the district of Manatuto. Volunteers from nearby villages were settled in this new village in order to cultivate the fields cooperatively and to also increase the production, so they finally are able to support themselves independently. I had the impression that those people are very optimistic. My impression was confirmed by the local priests. "

Mr. Chairman,

I could go on quoting from this and so many other sources of information and eye-witness accounts, which are all readily available to those sincerely interested in knowing the truth about East Timor, but which are always deliberately ignored by Indonesia's detractors. But since my time is limited, I simply wish to point out once again, how starkly different the real situation in East Timor is from the distortive picture which such organizations such as Pax Christi, Pax Romana, the International League for the Rights and Liberation of

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Peoples seek to depict of the province, as a land of famine and misery, of torture and strife and supposedly hermetically closed from the outside world. I would further ask the question : in the light of all the facts and positive developments that have been made available to any unbiased observers (not by the Indonesian Government alone, but also by scores of foreign dignitaries, diplomats, journalists and parliamentary missions which have visited the island over the years), for how much longer should we tolerate a malicious campaign based on hearsay and deliberate disinformation, be waged against Indonesia, in the name of "human rights".

Mr. Chairman,

On many occasions in the past, my Delegation has had the opportunity to apprise the Commission of the facts and figures reflecting the transformation of East Timor from an erstwhile neglected colonial outpost to an autonomous and rapidly developing province of Indonesia, which is indeed the only truly dramatic aspect of the situation. But I shall not go into this aspect again at this time, for I know that Indonesia's habitual detractors are wont to dismiss such facts as simply irrelevant to their designs and to their particular concept of basic human rights. Neither should I lend dignity to other unfounded charges, insinuations and misrepresentations which our critics have repeated ad nauseam over the years.

Let me therefore, conclude by reiterating the remarks made by our Foreign Minister on the 20th of June 1985 in Jakarta in which on questions of human rights he once again stressed Indonesia's views as follows :

> "If concern is expressed in a responsible manner as is done by bona fide organizations such as the ICRC, which has been operating here for several years, making visits on the spot, examining conditions objectively, talking to the people concerned, then this kind of criticism, if you can call it that, is beneficial both ways. We

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are made aware of things that might not be known in Jakarta and it can be shown that we have corrected certain conditions and that things have improved considerably. We do not mind people going to East Timor, but we want these people to be responsible people, reputable people, of whom we can be reasonably sure of giving a balanced report."

Thank you Mr. Chairman.